

Remarks

1. Introduction

Claims 32-37, 66-71, and 77-98 are currently pending. Claims 32 and 80 are independent claims.

2. Rejections based on 35 U.S.C. §§102, 103

Claims 32-37 and 66-67, 70-71, 77-82, and 84 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,836,792 (Chen). Claims 68-69 and 83 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable by Chen in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,742,763 (Jones).

The Chen reference discloses an add-on service. The add-on service is described in the Chen reference as follows:

users who wish to subscribe to an add-on service are provided with an email address that includes not only the domain of the destination email system (e.g., email system 130) but also the domain name of add-on service system 302. Preferably, the email address is constructed such that it appears to all other relay nodes in Internet 110 to be destined for add-on service system 302 to ensure proper routing thereto. By way of example, if the user's email address prior to subscription to the add-on services is "abc@xyz.com", the email address that is assigned to that user after the user subscribes to the add-on services may be, for example, "abc@xyz.middleware.com" wherein "middleware.com" represents the domain name of the add-on service system.

Col. 6, lines 41-54. Further, the Chen reference describes examples of the add-on service as follows:

By way of example, some of the add-on services may include one or more of the following: virus scanning, anti-spamming, paging, auto-redirection of the received email to another domain, auto-reply back to the sender with a pre-selected message, conversion of the information contained in the email to voice or fax or another medium, anonymizing the sender identity, dispatching (i.e., filtering and/or sorting, and directing the filtered/sorted emails to separate folders or email boxes), mailing list, security encryption prior to forwarding to the destination email system, and the like.

Col. 7, lines 15-25. Thus, in order for the user to access the add-on service, the user must compose an e-mail whereby the message includes both the address of the e-mail server (in the example, xyz email domain name) and the address of the add-on service ("for example, 'abc@xyz.middleware.com' where 'middleware.com' represents the domain name of the add-on

service system.”). The electronic message is then sent to the add-on service using the address of the add-on service in the electronic message. After the add-on service performs its designated service, the electronic message may then be sent to the e-mail service.

The Jones reference teaches a message delivery system whereby entities are represented by network presences associated with handle identifiers used as addresses. Col. 1, lines 6-10. Jones teaches that electronic mail addresses are difficult to remember. Col. 1, line 66 – col. 2, line 2. In order to overcome this problem, Jones teaches that handles may be used and states that “[e]ach handle provides a distinct cyberpresence identifier for an entity.” col. 2, lines 61-62. The handle, such as “bigbear”, “Jane_Farnsworth”, “ATT”, “usenet.rec.gardening”, “empiricists”, “president_XYZ”, is used as a universal address. It acts to identify **both** the end user and the end device. Attributes are associated with a particular handle such as a telephone number or a fax number. If the attributes indicate that the address is a telephone number, a call is made to the end user. Moreover, Jones teaches that each network presence must have a distinct handle. Col. 4, lines 45-51.

In contrast to the cited reference, one aspect of the invention is directed to nickname-based routing, which enables outside senders to address specific endpoints of the user, such as a user’s pager, cell phone, or fax machine, by sending messages to the platform’s main address preceded by a specific nickname. Thus, the electronic message includes the designation of the user, and the nickname for an endpoint that is associated with the user. The platform receives the electronic message, parses the designation of the user and the nickname of the endpoint. Using a database, the platform may determine an address of the endpoint. Specifically, the database correlates the designation of the user to a plurality of nicknames of endpoints and correlates the plurality of endpoints to a plurality of addresses. In this manner, using “the determined designation of the user and the determined nickname of the endpoint,” the address of the endpoint may be determined.

Applicants respectfully disagree that the cited references render the claims unpatentable. As an initial matter, applicants disagree that the Chen reference discloses nicknames. The example given in Chen of “abc@xyz.middleware.com”, where “middleware.com” is the add-on service, is not a nickname. Rather, it is the domain name used as an address for the add-on service. Even assuming that Chen teaches a nickname (which applicant does not contend), the “nickname” is associated with the same address for all users. In contrast, claim 32 recites a

database which correlates the designation of the user with the nickname and the nickname with an address. See “the database correlating the designation of the user to the plurality of nicknames of endpoints, the database correlating the plurality of nicknames to a plurality of addresses”. Chen does not teach any correlation of the designation of the user with the nickname. In other words, multiple users may send an electronic message to the “middleware.com” add-on service. In each instance, the electronic message will go to the same address. By contrast, because the database correlates the designation of the user to the nickname and the nickname to an address, one electronic message that designates user 1 and FAX will be sent to the address of the facsimile machine associated with user 1, whereas another electronic message that designates user 2 and FAX will be sent to the address of the facsimile machine associated with user 2 (instead of to the same facsimile machine). In that sense, the nickname may be dynamically dependent on the endpoint selected and eliminates the need for the user to memorize the plurality of addresses for the plurality of endpoints.

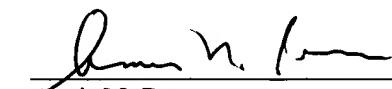
Further, the Jones reference does not teach several limitations recited in claim 32. The Jones reference merely teaches a single handle, and does not teach both the user designation and the endpoint nickname. Further, Jones fails to teach a database which correlates the designation of the user with the nickname and the nickname with an address. Therefore, claim 32, and the claims which depend thereon, are patentable over the cited references.

Similarly, the Chen reference fails to anticipate the claim 80. Again, even assuming that Chen teaches a nickname (which applicants do not contend), the Chen reference fails to teach an electronic message which includes both the nickname of the endpoint and the address of the endpoint. Further, Chen fails to teach that the “the nickname of the endpoint being selected from a plurality of nicknames and being dynamically dependent on the endpoint selected”. Finally, Chen fails completely to dynamically define the endpoint. See “sending the electronic message using the nickname of the endpoint and the address of the endpoint enables a sender to dynamically define the nickname in the electronic message”. The Jones reference likewise fails to teach a nickname for an endpoint, an address associated with the nickname in the electronic message (including a numeric address), determining a type of endpoint based on the nickname, and formatting for the determined type are not taught or suggested in the Jones reference. Thus, applicants believe that claim 80, and the claims that depend thereon, are patentably distinct over the cited art.

3. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit pending claims 32-37, 66-71, and 77-98 are allowable in their present form, and hereby request allowance of the claims. If any questions arise or issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below in order to expedite disposition of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



Amir N. Penn
Registration No. 40,767
Attorney for Applicant

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610
(312) 321-4200